

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

DeLaval Blue Diamond Manufacturing

Washington Manufacturing Services

DeLaval Blue Diamond Manufacturing Realizes Great Gains From Lean Implementation

Client Profile:

DeLaval Blue Diamond Manufacturing, located in Mt. Vernon, Washington, is a leader in the manufacture of automated dairy milking parlors. They were purchased by multi-national corporation DeLaval after 37 years of private ownership by its founder and CEO, Chuck Rogers. The company employs 45 people.

Situation:

As the transition progressed from a stand-alone manufacturing company to being part of a worldwide corporation with competitive manufacturing operations across the globe, DeLaval Blue Diamond General Manager Ken Johnson knew that they would have to change in order to remain competitive in the new organization. After months of research and investigation, Ken and his team decided on Lean Manufacturing as their course of action. DeLaval Blue Diamond Manufacturing contacted the Washington Manufacturing Services (WMS), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

In September 2004, DeLaval Blue Diamond Manufacturing began their implementation of Lean Manufacturing with the assistance of WMS and a Washington State JSP training grant. Under the leadership of consultant Charles "Luke" Lukey, the program was championed by DeLaval Blue Diamond employees Tim Collings and Pat Griffith and began with a series of Lean Manufacturing training sessions on Lean Manufacturing and its potential impacts on the employees and workplace. The crucial buy-in and commitment of both employees and management was successful, and the changes began. In the employee Lean training, much of the time was spent covering the concepts of 5S, Value Stream Mapping, and identifying and removing "muda", or waste, from manufacturing processes. This training became the foundation of the effort as employees organized "muda" walks and identified and took appropriate actions to remove waste from the manufacturing processes. Part of the great emerging success at DeLaval Blue Diamond Manufacturing was the changes that affected the largely Hispanic workforce, as they found themselves empowered and encouraged to make changes to their work areas and processes. A sense of pride and ownership began to grow as small successes became large gains driven by those closest to the processes. As Lean took hold, the common language of Lean emerged as the language of change. There was a common focus for both employees and management as goals were met and changes accelerated.

Results:

- * Reduced raw material inventory by more than 40 percent.
- * Reduced Work In Progress by over 33 percent.
- * Reduced lead times by over 30 percent.

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- * Removed non-value added material movement.
- * Expanded lean processes to include administrative tasks of estimating, order processing, customer response times, and sale quoting.
- * Empowered employees to make changes to their work areas and processes.

Testimonial:

"The real measurement of success here lies not in the great implementation of Lean Manufacturing to date, but to the real end result of the effort. Due to the changes we've made, DeLaval Blue Diamond Manufacturing has now positioned itself for success in the Asian market. "

Ken Johnson, General Manager